DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 1/26/82

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3. Most of the EIC participants visited polling stations in Saigon. However, 69 of them traveled to MR I, 72 to MR 2, 29 to outlying parts of MR 3, and 44 to MR 4 for regional tours. There were also special EIC trips by helicopter to some MR 3 and MR 4 provinces a short distance from Saigon.

4. On the EIC's list of foreign observers were 26 visiting Americans (see enclosure), some of whom came at their own initiative and some at specific GVN invitation. A Foreign Ministry source has told us that most of the latter group were invited rather hastily about two weeks before election day, because it appeared in mid-September that very little use would be made of the Election Information Center by foreign observers unless a special effort were made to drum up participation. Those chosen for special invitation were considered to be reasonably friendly to the GVN.

5. Most of the Americans on the EIC list came and went without checking in with the Embassy. Notable among the exceptions were Messrs. Penniman (who is writing a book on Vietnamese elections), Steibel, and Thornton, who came as a group and kept in touch with the Embassy after contacting it on arrival. (Bill Moyers, who toured outside the framework of the EIC though coming at special EIC invitation, called on the Ambassador during his visit.) The Foreign Ministry and the EIC held the names of the specially invited Americans rather closely, apparently to avoid causing resentment on the part of other friendly individuals who had not been invited, and also to avoid compromising the credibility of those accepting the invitations.

6. The foreign visitors from countries other than the United States included three members of the British Parliament (Messrs. Ian Sprout, Patrick Cormack, and Lord Kennet), three Japanese Diet members, one Australian Senator, retired French General Vanuxem (an old Indochina hand), and British guerrilla-warfare expert Sir Robert Thompson. Fifteen countries were represented, besides the United States and Vietnam, on the EIC's list. Two of these countries, however, were represented only by locally-based diplomats.

7. The basic impression of the election gained by most of the observers was officially described as "favorable." This is probably a correct description, but from reports reaching us we gather this opinion was modified in most cases by a belief that the one-man race detracted from the worth of the election. Most observers also realized that they could form only a superficial view of the workings of the election from these tours, which covered just the voting process and the initial stages of ballot-counting afterward. (A separate report on comments of election observers follows.)

BUNKER

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Visiting American Observers of GVN Presidential Election

October 3, 1971

(GVN Election Information Center list)

Michael L. Culbert	Berkeley Daily Gazette
Richard Thornton	professor
Howard R. Penniman	professor
Gerald L. Steibel, Jr.	newsletter editor
Barry Jay Serrins	journalist
Andras Pogany	Seton Hall University
Louisa Porter	journalist
John C. Vecchioni	journalist
William H. Reed	VOA
Carl D. Robison	AP
Jack Perkins	NBC
Wallace Driver	journalist
Michael W. Thompson	journalist
Joseph F. Abate	reporter, Republican National Committee
Daniel Teodoru	news service
O. Shaughnessy	professor
Charles Morgan Smith	Rocky Mountain Reporter
Frances L. Starner	Far Eastern Economic Review
Kenley Jones	NBC
Iver E. Peterson	New York Times
Nancy Moran Peterson	New York Times
Ennio Iacobucci	journalist
Normand H. Choinicre	journalist
Manuel Bulvang	photo correspondent
Victor C. Diehm	Mutual Broadcasting System, Inc.
Wesley C. Davis	Berkeley University

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Action Assigned to EA/VN

Action Taken

FROM : Amembassy SAIGON RS/AN ANALYSIS BRANCH

DATE: October 30, 1971

SUBJECT : Comments of Election Observers on the Polling Day, October 3

Action Office Symbol EA/VN

Name of Officer

REF : Saigon A-184, October 29, 1971

1. SUMMARY: Foreign election observers who watched the Vietnamese Presidential election on October 3 felt that within the basic limitations of a single-slate election, the actual balloting was carried out in a creditable manner. Certain flaws were evident to the advantage of the Thieu-Huong slate, but generally these did not appear to be a major factor, certainly not as important as influences exerted outside the voting process. END SUMMARY.

2. On election day October 3, more than a hundred foreigners participated in official trips sponsored by the GVN's Election Information Center to observe the balloting around the country. These included specially invited visitors, correspondents, and resident diplomats. (The referenced airgram reports further on the Election Information Center's activities.) American Embassy officers participated in the official trips to the military regions and also independently visited polling stations in Saigon and neighboring provinces. The following are some of the major impressions of the balloting on election day as collected informally and at random from observers.

3. All observers with whom we talked had a favorable opinion of the manner in which the polling was conducted, as far as this could be seen from the relatively superficial observation that was possible. They commented that the procedures seemed orderly and efficient and were basically the same in all polling stations. On the surface, the voting mechanics were designed to provide a secret choice to voters and an honest tabulation afterward. Both voters and polling officials appeared to go about their tasks conscientiously.

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